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DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV  
TREASURY FOR USED IBRD AND IDB AND INTL/MDB  
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE: LIZ MAHEW  
INTERIOR FOR DIR INT AFFAIRS: K WASHBURN  
INTERIOR FOR NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE: J PUTNAM  
INTERIOR FOR FWS: TOM RILEY  
INTERIOR PASS USGS FOR INTERNATIONAL: J WEAVER  
JUSTICE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES: JWEBB  
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SUBJECT: FIRST AMAZON BASIN CONSERVATION INITIATIVE PARTNERS  
MEETING

11. SUMMARY: USAID held the first Amazon Basin Conservation Initiative (ABCI) partners meeting from February 5-8 to lay the foundation for developing detailed work plans to implement this regional, five-year, \$65 million dollar program. Over seventy participants from the six partner consortia, USAID, Department of State, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and the Government of Peru discussed a wide range of conservation challenges, opportunities and program management issues. Participants agreed to carry out the following priority actions: 1) formalize ACTO/ABCI relationship; 2) define priority basin-wide policy issues; 3) produce ABCI briefing packages for Embassies; 4) present ABCI program to national governments (by March 30), with discretion given to any local sensitivities to the ABCI program; 5) identify areas to support NGO partners in training and capacity building, communication and knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation; 6) finalize life-of-project and first 18 month work plans; and 7) launch ABCI program with public events in each country. In addition to generating consensus on next steps, this event provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to identify synergies and outline priority actions. The design of this landmark program aims at building the capacity of organizations and public commitment for the effective stewardship of the Basin's unique and globally important biological diversity. END SUMMARY.

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Discussion, Projects, and Partners  
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12. USAID held the first partners meeting in Yucay, Peru (Feb. 5-8, 2007) to lay the foundation for developing detailed work plans to implement the five-year, \$65 million Amazon Basin Conservation Initiative (ABCI). The opening speech was given by the Protected Areas Manager of the Peruvian National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), Mr. Luis Alfaro, who welcomed the visitors and expressed support to strike the balance between biodiversity

conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the Amazon Basin. Over seventy participants from the six partners (five conservation consortia and the Program Secretariat; USAID (mission staff from Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru); the Department of State Regional Environmental Affairs Officer from US Embassy Brasilia; Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO); and the Government of Peru discussed a wide range of conservation challenges, opportunities and program management issues. Each of the six partners presented their consortium members, program objectives, geographic focus, planned activities, potential for synergies and main challenges. A brief description of each consortia program is provided below.

13. The "Challenging the Advance of the Deforestation Frontier in the Brazilian Amazon" conservation consortium will be implemented by Instituto Internacional de Educacao do Brasil (International Institute of Education of Brazil-IEB), Instituto do Homem e Meio Ambiente na Amazonia (Amazon Institute of People and the Environment-IMAIZON), Kaninde-Associacao de Defesa Etno- Ambiental (Association of Ethno-Environmental Defense), and Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF). The objective of this consortium is to strengthen environmental governance and empower local stakeholders to deal with the socio-environmental problems associated with deforestation in the southwest Brazilian Amazon (Amazonas State). This will be accomplished by building local capacity, monitoring landscape trends, and establishing a framework for sustainable learning.

14. The "Conserving the Madidi-Manu Landscape of Bolivia and Peru" conservation consortium will be implemented by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Asociacion para Conservacion de la Amazonia (Amazon Conservation Association-ACA), Fundacion Proteccion y Uso Sostenible del Medio Ambiente (Foundation for Protection and Sustainable Use of the Environment-PUMA), Fondo de las Americas del Peru (Fund of the Americas of Peru-FONDAM), and Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental

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(Peruvian Society for Environmental Law-SPDA). The objectives of this consortium are to improve landscape planning and implementation, develop community-based eco-enterprises, and build environmental governance in the southwest Amazon of Peru and Bolivia. These objectives will be accomplished by assessing and developing strategies to address the impacts of large-scale infrastructure development, planning and managing conservation areas at diverse scales, building local capacity for improved land management, strengthening the financial sustainability of community-based eco-enterprises, and building a shared landscape vision with improved environmental governance.

15. The "Indigenous Landscapes: Strengthening Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon Basin" conservation consortium will be implemented by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Instituto del Bien Comun (Institute for the Common Good-IBC), Fundacion Sobrevivencia Cofn (Foundation for the Survival of the Cofan-FSC), Coordenacao das Organizacoes Indigenas da Amazonia Brasileira (Coordination of the Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon-COIAB), and Instituto Internacional de Educacao do Brasil (International Institute of Education of Brazil-IEB). The objective of this consortium is to strengthen environmental management of indigenous lands at four landscape-level sites - two in Brazil and one each in Peru and Ecuador. This will be accomplished by strengthening the capacity of Amazonian indigenous organizations, improving protection and environmental management in four target indigenous landscapes, and catalyzing conservation and sustainable development coalitions with indigenous Amazonian organizations as core members.

16. The "Environmental Governance in the MAP Region of Peru, Brazil and Bolivia" conservation consortium will be implemented by The University of Florida (UF), Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC), Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazonia (Institute for Environmental Research in Amazonia-IPAM), SOS Amazonia, Herencia, Universidade Federal do Acre (Federal University of Acre-UFAC), Universidad Amazonica de Pando (Amazonian University of Pando-UAP), Universidad Nacional Amazonica de Madre de Dios (Nacional Amazonian University of Madre de Dios-UNAMAD), and Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo - Proyecto Especial de Madre de Dios (National Institute of Development-INADE)- Special Project of the Madre de Dios-PEMD).

The objectives of this consortium are to reduce the loss of biodiversity and environmental services in the southwest Amazon of Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and to serve as an example for international collaboration on trans-boundary issues across the Amazon Basin. These objectives will be accomplished by developing collaborative management plans for trans-boundary watersheds, promoting participatory planning along the trans-boundary highway, and expanding environmental governance capacity.

¶7. The "Sustainable Livelihoods in the Western Amazon" conservation consortium will be implemented by Rainforest Alliance, Fundacion Natura (Nature Foundation-FN), and Conservacion y Desarrollo (Conservation and Development-C y D). The objectives of this consortium are to reduce environmental degradation and improve community livelihoods in the western Amazon of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. These objectives will be accomplished by increasing the sales volume and revenue of certified sustainable timber, non-timber, agriculture and tourism products.

¶8. The ABCI Program Secretariat will be implemented by International Resources Group (IRG), Academy for Educational Development (AED), Instituto Internacional de Educacao do Brasil (International Institute of Education of Brazil-IEB), Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (Peruvian Society for Environmental Law-SPDA), and Social Impact (SI). The Secretariat will ensure that programs carried out by the conservation consortia are mutually reinforcing by organizing regular participant meetings and supporting capacity building, communications, and dissemination of lessons learned. The Secretariat will also build linkages to other

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regional stakeholders by strengthening public-private partnerships and building regional dialogue, and will assure program-wide cohesion by working with NGO consortia to prepare comprehensive work plans and progress reports.

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Putting ABCI into the regional context  
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¶9. The keynote speakers provided insights and innovative ideas on meeting the challenges of the agro-industrial explosion in the Amazon Basin, learning from multi-country programs and developing effective communication tools in a regional context. The working groups focused on compliance with USAID regulations as well as how to increase synergies and opportunities between and among the consortia so that the sum of all projects would be greater than any individual project. USG representatives from USAID and the Department of State also met with the ACTO to discuss nextsteps and the roles and responsibilities of the management team and Advisory Panel, both charged with ensuring this project fulfills its ambitious regional mandate.

¶10. Daniel Nepstad, Senior Researcher at the Woods Hole Research Center and Amazon Institute for Environmental Research, described alarming deforestation trends in the Basin and highlighted opportunities for establishing economic incentives to maintain forest cover, e.g., environmentally-sound soy bean certification and carbon markets. Global markers and consumer demands are forcing producers to obey the law and apply best practices. He advocated both efforts to transform industry by rewarding good behavior, and the importance of working with large actors, such as banks and private sector.

¶11. John Pielemeier, former USAID Brazil Director, outlined lessons learned from the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and other regional programs. These included the need for simple governance structures, balancing participation with efficiency, applying a long-term planning horizon, e.g., 20 years attracting outside financing to supplement USAID funds, and especially working through a regional organization such as ACTO.

¶12. Anthony Collins, Specialist in Information Technology at the International Potato Center, highlighted key lessons and best practices in sharing knowledge and communications, including the use of new collaboration tools. He focused on the importance of keeping

tools simple and demand driven.

¶13. Working groups focused on: training and capacity building, communications and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, emerging regional policy issues, program management, and synergies among program partners. Presentations also included an overview of USAID's environmental compliance requirements and a uniform template for work plans and performance reports. Participants met in working groups, informally and in plenary sessions to identify potential areas of synergy and collaboration, as well as to explore actions to achieve a broader, Basin-wide impact.

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Next Steps  
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¶14. The participants agreed to carry out the following priority actions: 1) formalize the ACTO/ABCI relationship; 2) define priority basin-wide policy issues; 3) produce ABCI briefing packages for Embassies; 4) present the ABCI program to national governments (by March 30), with discretion given to any local sensitivities to the program; 5) identify areas to support NGO partners in training and capacity building, communication and knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation; 6) finalize life-of-project and first 18

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month work plans; and 7) launch the ABCI program with public events in each country.

¶15. USG points of contact: Connie Campbell, LAC/RSD is the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) for the cooperative agreements that fund the "Indigenous Landscapes: Strengthening Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon Basin" and the "Environmental Governance in the MAP Region of Peru, Brazil and Bolivia" conservation consortia, and the USAID contract that funds the Program Secretariat. Julie Kunen, LAC/RSD is the CTO for the cooperative

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agreements that fund the "Challenging the Advance of the Deforestation Frontier in the Brazilian Amazon" and the "Sustainable Livelihoods in the Western Amazon" conservation consortia. Laura Cornwell, LAC/RSD is the CTO for the "Conserving the Madidi-Manu Landscape of Bolivia and Peru" conservation consortium. USG points of contact within the Basin are: Ricardo Roca, USAID Bolivia, for activities in Bolivia; Ernani Pila, USAID Brazil, for activities in Brazil; Bruce Bayle, USAID Colombia, for activities in Colombia; Doug Mason, USAID Ecuador, for activities in Ecuador; Steve Olive, USAID Peru, for activities in Peru; and James Story, Department of State Regional Environmental Affairs Officer US Embassy Brasil, for activities in other Basin countries.

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Comment  
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¶16. The participants left with a strong sense of ownership of the overall program and commitment to collaboration in order to achieve a significant conservation impact across the Amazon Basin. The role of the USAID missions in the region, as well as the Department of State Regional Environmental Hub and individual Environment, Science, Technology, and Health (ESTH) officers at post (especially those without a USAID presence), is to ensure that this program is fully explained to those government ministries with mandates that cover the subject areas considered in the ABCI program. Early and frequent interactions with the governments in the Amazon Basin will ensure political buy-in throughout the process and offer an opportunity for increased dialogue on environmental issues in the countries. (These activities should be coordinated through the ABCI overall coordinator, Connie Campbell at LAC/RSD in Washington as well as through the individual points of contact in each country and the CTOs charged with making final decisions on work plans, etc. for each of the consortia.) In addition, keeping government interlocutors involved in this process may generate the kind of synergies envisioned by the ABCI through such activities as increased Global Environmental Facility programming in biodiversity conservation in various countries and other similar activities. END

